NEW
NICK CARTER
WEEKLY

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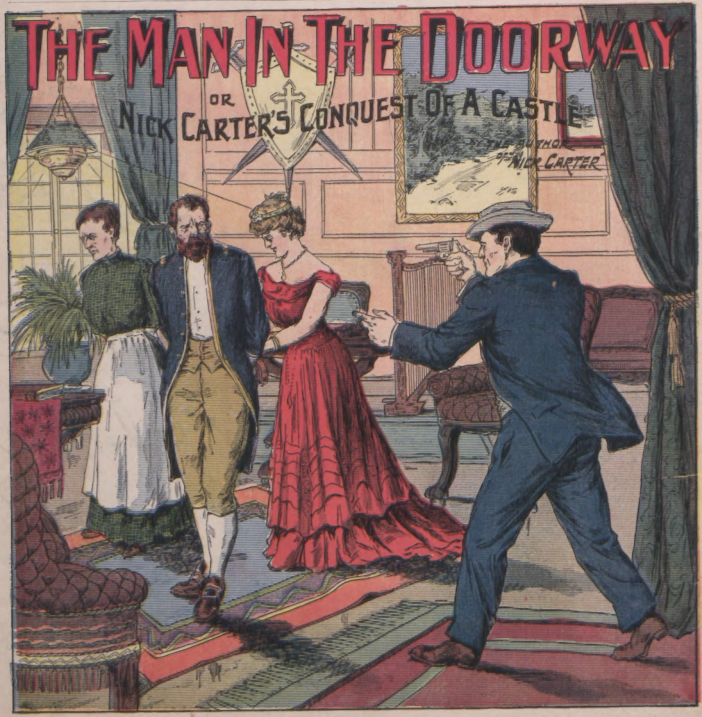

He then commanded Emile and the fraulein to place their hands behind their back, after which he directed the princess how to snap the irons on their wrists.

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No. 523. NEW YORK, January 5, 1907. Price Five Cents.

The Man in the Doorway;

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OR,

Nick Carter's Conquest of a Castle.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

A MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE.

"If you will find that boy of mine, Mr. Carter, no matter where he is, or what lie has done since he went away, there is nothing under the sun that I won't do for you and yours to prove my appreciation and gratitude."

The detective leaned back in his chair and deliberately lighted a cigar from the box that stern old Porter Maxim, the multimillionaire, had shoved across the table toward him.

Nick Carter had gone to the office of the magnate in response to an urgent letter he had received that morning from Mr. Maxim. It had been dictated the preceding day, and said in brief:

"Can you call upon me at my office at nine o'clock to-morrow morning? I wish to consult with you on a matter of vital importance to me and mine. If I could well spare the time to go to you I would do so. I shall be under lasting obligations to you if you will come to see me at the hour named."

Porter Maxim was not a man who made such a request as this one idly, and therefore promptly at nine o'clock of the morning named the detective presented himself at the office in Broad Street, and was at once conducted to the capitalist.

"It is very kind of you to be so prompt, Mr. Carter," said the old gentleman, rising and shaking Nick's hand cordially. "Sit down and help yourself to one of those cigars, if you care to smoke."

"Thank you," replied Nick.

"I asked you to come rather early, Carter, in order that we might have an hour to ourselves before the business of the day begins to rush me; and I expect to be particularly busy to-day, too."

"It is not at all early for me, Mr. Maxim," responded the detective, smiling. "Now, sir, in what way can I serve you?"

The old capitalist smiled grimly as he replied:

"It is not often, Carter, that a man who is reputed to be worth his scores of millions, as I am, is forced to sue for charity; but it is a work of charity on your

part which I wish you to perform. Don't misunderstand me, however. I will gladly give you a check for a million dollars, and think it cheap at the price, if you succeed in accomplishing what I wish you to do; or if you should prefer it—I am told that you are already a rich man—I will devote that amount, or even more, to founding a hospital, or a home for unfortunates, or for any other charity you may select."

"That is very generous of you, sir," said Nick, bowing.

"I put it in that way, Carter, because I wish to impress upon you the fact that—well, the fact that no payment of mere money can compensate you for the favor you will have done for me if you succeed in what I am about to ask."

"You mystify me very greatly, Mr. Maxim. What is it, please?"

"All the world knows that I have a son, I believe, Mr. Carter."

"I think so—yes."

"And all the world—that is, all that part of the world which interests itself in my affairs—believes that my son is now in Germany, at Heidelberg, attending college."

"Well, sir?" said Nick.

"That is, however, not the case. The fact is that I do not know where my son is. He has been utterly lost to us—his mother and me—for something more than a year now. He *was* at Heidelberg at the time he disappeared—to be exact, thirteen months ago. But I did not know that he had left there until less than three months ago; so, you see, he had practically eleven months' start."

"Do you mean by that that he ran away?" asked Nick.

"Yes."

"From what?"

The old man was silent for a moment, as if in an effort to collect his thoughts, for he was, above all things, methodical; then he replied:

"I will tell you first exactly what I *know* about his disappearance; after that we will go into the reasons for that disappearance."

"Very well," said Nick.

"Just before the summer vacation-time last year Maxwell—that is his given name—wrote to me that he had decided, if I had no objections, to take a trip through Norway with some companions who had pressed him to do so. He elected to do that instead of returning home for the summer. This was to have been his last year at Heidelberg, by the way."

"Well?"

"I approved of the proposed trip, and wrote to him to that effect. He replied, thanking me for the permission, and he said in that letter that it would be as well if I should not look for letters from him until his return, as the party intended to be far away from post-office facilities during the trip. That correspondence happened in June of last year."

"Yes."

"I did not hear from him again until the October following. Then I received a short letter, in which he stated that he had returned to his studies; that he had enjoyed the trip exceedingly; that he was very well—and all that."

"Well? Go on, please."

"Maxwell has never been much of a letter-writer. A short note from him occasionally, to his mother or to me, was all that we ever expected, save the one fact that he never permitted a week to pass without some sort of a reminder of his existence."

"Tell me what you mean by that?"

"Well, he would send a book, or a card, or a bit of lace, or a picture, or a bit of jewelry, or a keepsake of some sort, to his mother."

"And do you mean to say that such things as you describe have come to his mother regularly?"

"Yes."

"Until three months ago?"

"Until now, sir. The last one we received came yesterday; an exquisitely illustrated volume of Goethe's poems—and yet I *know* that my boy has not been in Heidelberg for more than a year."

"Do you suppose that he could have disappeared while he was in Norway, and that some chum of his, at his request, has been keeping up this habit of sending souvenirs to your wife?"

"Maxwell did not go to Norway at all, Mr. Carter."

"Are you sure about that?"

"Let me proceed in my own way and you will discover how sure I am about things, and also how utterly uncertain I am about anything."

"All right, Mr. Maxim."

"Some months ago one of his old playmates—they were inseparable when they were children—went for a trip abroad. I urged Jack to go to Heidelberg and visit Maxwell. Well, Mr. Carter, he went there, but he could not find Maxwell, or any trace of him. He was told that my son had closed out his connection with the college at the close of the preceding year, and *that he was at home with his father in America.*"

The detective nodded, and the financier continued:

"Jack Roberts at once cabled to me about it. I kept the wires hot after that for awhile, but the result of it all was that it became only too evident that Maxwell had disappeared utterly about the time he told me, or, rather, wrote to me to the effect that he was going to Norway for the summer with some friends.

"But all the cabling we could do did not alter the fact. Maxwell had disappeared, and not a soul in

Heidelberg knew, or appeared at first to know, anything about him."

"You say 'appeared at first to know.' What do you mean by that?"

"I am coming to that. I suppose you are aware of the fact that my firm has branch houses in all the principal cities of Europe?"

"Yes."

"Well, I communicated with our houses in Berlin, Paris, and London. I stated the case to the managers of each of those houses as perfectly as I could do so. I instructed them to employ the very best detective talent that could be found and to spare no expense in the effort to locate Maxwell, and to unravel the mystery about him. Mr. Carter, during the last three months all Europe has been scoured from end to end in the search for him, and not a trace of him has been found. Every European detective who has worked on the case has confessed himself foiled. They have all given it up."

"But you have more to tell me?"

"Oh, yes; a good deal more."

"What is it?"

"The Scotland Yard man who worked on the case—Trevelyan by name—has sent me a long report in writing. I will give that report into your hands when I have done with what I have to say, for I apprehend that you will wish to read it at your leisure."

"Yes."

"The substance of his report is to the effect that Maxwell—I do not believe it, but it is the report and should be considered seriously by you for all it is worth—that Maxwell, during several months prior to his disappearance, had been living a double life. In fact, Trevelyan reports that while keeping up his career at college Maxwell had, under another name, become involved with a young woman—had, in fact, married her under that assumed name."

"Go on, Mr. Maxim."

"It seems that not one of the other detectives ferreted this thing out, which leads me to regard it as possible—nay, probable—that Trevelyan is mistaken."

"Never mind; tell me what it is."

"The assumed name is supposed to have been Carl von Krebs. Now, this so-called Carl von Krebs had purchased, or leased, a magnificent country estate not far from Heidelberg, to which place he had taken his bride."

"Wait a moment. Who was the bride?"

"There is a mystery about who she was before the so-called Carl von Krebs married her; but I think that her identity has nothing to do with our matter."

"I don't agree with you in that idea; but go on. Tell me what followed."

"The thing that followed was a murder—nothing less."

"A murder!"

"Yes. The beautiful young woman whom Carl von Krebs had married was found cruelly murdered at her home. There was convincing proof everywhere that her husband had killed her—and he had disappeared.

"Now, as I said a moment ago, Trevelyan is the only one who has connected the identity of Carl von Krebs with my son, and his reasons for doing so are given in the report from him which you will read. The main points are that the murder and the escape of the murderer are identical in time with the disappearance of Maxwell, and that a torn photograph, afterward identified by him as Maxwell's, was discovered by him in that house."

"Then it is Trevelyan's opinion that your son committed the murder, and that he is now in hiding because of that crime?"

"Exactly."

CHAPTER II.

SHROUDED IN UNCERTAINTY.

"I think," said the detective, "that if you will let me have that report of Trevelyan's at once I would like to read it through before we go any further—and if you don't think that you will have the time to devote to me now I will take the report away with me, and will call upon you at your home this evening."

"No; we will finish with it now. I will take the time, no matter what it costs me."

"That is the way to talk. Now, where is the report?"

The millionaire crossed the room to a small private safe, and after a moment placed the report in the detective's hands.

We need not give that report here in detail, for the substance of it will be referred to in the conversation which followed; but as soon as the detective had read it carefully to the end he folded it and placed it in his pocket.

"Now, Mr. Maxim," he said, "I am going to subject you to a very thorough cross-examination. You must promise me not to object to any question I may ask, not to take offense at any remark I make, and not to think that I am reflecting unduly upon your son, no matter what I may have to say, or how I say it."

"I promise."

"If we are to get at the truth of this affair we must have the naked truth; nothing else. You agree with me in that?"

"I do."

"I will touch upon the subject matter of the report later; but first I require some general information about your son."

"Very well, sir."

"And I would suggest that before we begin it would be well if you give orders that we are not disturbed in here on any account or pretext. I do not wish to have your mind taken from this subject for one moment until we have finished."

"I have already given that order. Nobody will dare to disturb us."

"Very good. Now, how old is your son?"

"He is in his twenty-third year. His birthday occurs in December."

"So, in fact, at the time of his disappearance he was some months past twenty-one?"

"Yes."

"Trevelyan states in his report that the reported marriage of Carl von Krebs took place in January of that year—the January before the disappearance."

"Yes."

"Tell me how your son was supplied with money, Mr. Maxim."

"I don't know exactly what you mean by that question. He was always well supplied. Maxwell had a small fortune of his own—something less than two millions."

"Was it absolutely his own, to make use of as he pleased?"

"Yes; since the day of his matriculation at Heidelberg."

"So that since he has been there you have never had occasion to send him any money?"

"Not at all. He had his own money to spend as he pleased. He never asked me for any. Why should he?"

"In all conscience, he should not. Now, was he disposed to be a spendthrift?"

"Never. He was always generous—never a spendthrift."

"Has he ever been a gambler?"

"Never, in the sense in which you use the word. He has never objected to playing for reasonable stakes, but he never had a passion for gambling. I am positive about that. I may say right here that we are in no sense a straight-laced family; neither has any member of the family ever been disproportionately wild. Maxwell has never been different from the rest of us. Among his companions he has always been regarded as a good fellow."

"He did not drink to excess?"

"No."

"Was he inclined to make a fool of himself over women?"

"Not at all. He was always very fond of good women—and he was invariably disgusted with the other kind. You may suppose that I say that because I am his father, but I know it is correct, nevertheless."

"In short, then, you do not know of any really bad habits of his?"

"I may truthfully say that I do not. I don't wish you to get the idea that I have considered him as a young man without faults. That is not the case."

"Tell me, then, of his faults."

"Well, a revengeful temper, for one thing. Not a quick one. He has always been rather slow to wrath, but implacable and unforgiving when roused. He inherits that quality from me."

"Another, please?"

"Since his childhood, if he found himself placed in a position where he was thought by others to be in the wrong while he knew himself to be right, he would never condescend to explain; he invariably left the explanation to time and development."

"That is a very great fault," said Nick musingly. "Aaron Burr had it. His history might have read quite differently but for that fault of his."

"Yes." agreed the financier.

"Can you think of another?"

"I think those two are his most prominent characteristics which might be classed as faults. Of course, he has others. All young men have faults, and he is not, in the main, different from others. In a word, he has always been just an all-around affectionate, good, and thoughtful son, who occasionally lost his temper, who sometimes did things which brought severe reprimands upon him, but who was never vicious, never unjust, and never, I believe, anything but thoroughly honorable in his dealings with others."

"Then you have always had reason to be proud of him?"

"Emphatically, yes."

"And you have never hesitated to trust him?"

"Never."

"In any particular?"

"Never. And that reminds me—if there is another characteristic about Maxwell which might be classed as a fault it has been his impartial truthfulness. If he has ever lied to me in his life I don't know it. He always despised a lie and a liar. His utter truthfulness has sometimes been rather annoying, when silence could have taken the place of truth."

"I don't agree with you there, Mr. Maxim. It is a principle which may count in your business, however. Now, let us get back to Maxwell himself."

"Yes."

"When did you last see him?"

"He came to spend the holidays the last Christmas before the disappearance. He sailed for Germany again the second day of January."

"And Trevelyan's report tells me that the marriage of Carl von Krebs to the mysterious young person was celebrated some time during the last week of that month."

"Yes."

"When Maxwell was at home did he mention the idea that he was interested in any particular young woman?"

"No."

"Or that he was interested in any young woman?"

"The subject was never mentioned at all that I know of. Certainly not to me; and if he had referred to such a thing to his mother she would have told me."

"Has he ever referred to such a subject in any letter he has written?"

"No."

"Had you ever any expressed views about him concerning his probable marriage?"

"No. Not at all. I have always hoped that he would not think of marrying until he was at least thirty years old."

"Have you ever told him that?"

"No; I always thought it best to leave him utterly alone on that subject."

"Quite right."

"And I am sure that he had no idea of marriage with anybody at present."

"Is he naturally secretive?"

"Yes—and no."

"What do you mean by that form of reply?"

"I mean that he was naturally reticent upon subjects which he believed did not concern others; and that he was always frankness itself where another person was interested."

"I take it, then, that he is rather given to minding his own business, and permitting others to do the same, without question."

"You have hit him exactly in that opinion."

"Now, disabusing your mind of the idea that he referred to any young woman as a sweetheart while he was at home a year ago last Christmas, tell me if there are any young people—young women, I mean—in Germany to whom he referred at all particularly as acquaintances, or as intimate friends?"

"No. He talked mostly of his classmates when he referred to his life over there at all. I do recall that he mentioned two or three times having made the acquaintance of a princess something-or-other—I have entirely forgotten the name—who, he said, was very beautiful."

"You cannot recall the name?" asked Nick.

"No. He encountered her in the mountains somewhere. She was lost, or something like that, and he escorted her to her friends. He referred to it as a joke that he had no idea that she was a young woman of exalted rank until after he had left her."

"You say he referred to her two or three times?"

"Yes; but never directly in talking with me."

"Tell me, if you please, exactly how the reference happened to be made."

"Well, the first time I heard the subject mentioned we were entertaining some company in his honor. It was at the dining-table, when one of his friends called across the board to him a question as to whether he had been entertained by royalty, or if he had dined with the kaiser, or something like that."

"And his reply?"

"The question was put in a bantering tone, and he replied in the same spirit."

"What did he say?"

"He said: 'No; but I have met a princess. The only trouble is that I did not know she was a princess until after we parted.'

"When asked how that happened he replied that she was lost, or something like that—just as I have already explained it."

"And when was another time that he referred to her?"

"I heard his mother ask him, a day or so later, about the princess. He replied to her that her name was—it is strange that I cannot recall it; possibly it will occur to me later. Anyhow, he told his mother that she was a very beautiful young woman and very entertaining. Ah, yes! Her horse had become lamed. Maxwell escorted the princess to her friends. He then bade her good-by, and it was not until he had rejoined his own friends at the estate where he was a guest that he learned who she was. That is it."

"And was there a third time when he referred to her?"

"Why, yes; there was. That same Jack Roberts was with Maxwell in this office one afternoon. They were seated together over in that corner, waiting for me to finish the dictation of a letter, when I overheard Jack say to Maxwell:

"'I suppose you will be bringing home a German bride one of these days, Max.' And Maxwell replied that——"

"His exact words, if you please, Mr. Maxim."

"He replied: 'I have never seen but one girl over there for whom I would give a rap, and she happens to be a first cousin to royalty, Jack, so I guess there is no immediate danger.'"

CHAPTER III.

A PICTURE OF A WANTON CRIME.

The detective referred again to the report made by Trevelyan, and after a little he said:

"I notice that your Scotland Yard man based his supposition that Carl von Krebs was your son, who was living under an assumed name, upon the following details:

"First, that the only Carl von Krebs who is at present known in all Germany is a middle-aged man, who

lives quietly at his home, surrounded by his family, who spends all of his time upon his estates, rarely going to the capital, even.

"Second, that the family of Von Krebs utterly repudiates any connection whatever with the supposed Carl von Krebs who lived in the house where the murder was committed, and who is supposed to have killed wantonly his beautiful young wife.

"Third, that the German police have given out the information that this particular Carl von Krebs was an impostor, and that the name was only assumed.

"Fourth, that the person who did pose as Carl von Krebs was abundantly supplied with money; that he was, in fact, a man of great wealth.

"Fifth, that your son was sometimes absent from his studies for days at a time during the interval between the 20th of January and the time of the murder; and that these absences were never explained.

"Sixth, that the disappearance of Carl von Krebs and the disappearance of your son were identical as to time.

"Seventh, that the young couple lived quietly and mysteriously; that their servants were all imported, some from France and others from England; that Carl von Krebs was never seen by persons who could give a good description of him—that, in fact, he was never seen at all by any others than his servants, and that the servants disappeared as unaccountably as he did after the crime. This, Trevelyan adds, suggests that they were liberally paid for disappearing.

"Eighth, that he discovered the photograph, torn into bits, which he pieced together—that he found it where others had overlooked it, and that when he had pieced it together he discovered, and later proved it, to have been a photograph of your son. It was found, he adds, among the ashes of the fireplace in the library of that house; and—

"Ninth, the fact that the mystery which surrounds the entire affair so perfectly fits in with the mystery concerning the disappearance of Maxwell Maxim. Then he adds what we might call a tenth point, which is this:

"The absolute mystery surrounding the identity of the bride who was killed, and the fact that, although she was reputed to have been exceedingly beautiful, nobody could be found who could describe how she looked in life, while the murderer had disfigured her features so terribly that—well, that the body was unsightly.

"Now, Mr. Maxim, he adds one more thing which is interesting. It is this:

"He states that the authorities seemed not to make an effort proportionate with the gravity of the crime to apprehend the murderer."

"May I inquire, Mr. Carter," asked the millionaire, "if you are proceeding on the supposition that the husband of that murdered woman *was* my son?"

"For the moment I am—yes. I will proceed on that supposition until I have convinced myself that it is not the correct one; and you must proceed with me."

"But I *know* that Maxwell is incapable of such a crime. My God! If he should do such a thing as that I would wish that he had never been born!"

"Unquestionably. But you forget one thing."

"What is that?"

"That it is quite possible that he was the husband, but that, nevertheless, he did not commit the crime."

"How is that? I thought the two conditions were bound together as one."

"I don't think so. Let us suppose, for example, that he married that princess——"

"That is nonsense!"

"Please listen to me. Let us suppose that he fell in love with that princess whom he rescued. Let us suppose that she also loved him. Let us suppose still farther that they eloped together and were married; that she had disappeared utterly from her relatives and friends; that she was finally traced to that estate where she was afterward murdered. Have you never heard of the extreme measures sometimes taken by royalty to cover up a mésalliance such as this one would have been according to their ideas?"

"Yes."

"Let us go a little deeper into this supposition."

"Go just as deeply as you wish, Mr. Carter. I want this mystery solved, no matter what is brought to the surface."

"Well, then, let us say that Maxwell did marry the princess. Let us say that he posed as Carl von Krebs for some time before the marriage took place; that, as such, he purchased and fitted up the estate to which he finally took his bride; that he did it in some sort of disguise, if you please."

"Go ahead, Mr. Carter."

"Let us say that every plan was carefully laid; that he imported his servants, after carefully selecting them; that when the time came the princess had only to fly to the home he had created for her?"

"Well?"

"We come now to another phase of the proposition."

"What is it? I confess that I do not sympathize with you in these suppositions. But go on."

"The day comes—if we are on the right track—when the princess is missed from her home and friends. Her disappearance is a mystery—but it is a secret one, for persons of such rank who disappear are always accounted for in some manner. The disappearance is never divulged so that the world knows about it.

"But, as in a case of this kind, heaven and earth are moved in the effort to find out what has become of her."

"I can understand that."

"Now, in this case, if we are on the right track, the very cleverness of the flight of the princess was her safeguard—and the safeguard of her husband. She would be searched for across the border, while, in fact, she was all the time within a few leagues of her own home.

"Everybody in the neighborhood would be delicately questioned; the history of everything of late date in the locality would be known; and in reference to this particular house to which the bride was taken it would be discovered that the people who lived there had occupied it for months, perhaps, before the disappearance of the princess."

"But how could that be?"

"Because with a cool, deliberate planner that would be the very first thing attended to—to give the impression that the house was inhabited by its owners for a long time before it was used for the purpose for which it was prepared. That would be part of the plot."

"I see. I understand."

"*But*—with the entire secret service of the empire engaged in the search, it could not be very long, not many months, before the secret of the young couple would be discovered. The princess would inevitably be tracked down—inevitably traced to that estate and house.

"It would be developed that she had married a foreigner—an American—that she was living in seclusion with her husband.

"Think of the disgrace of it—from the standpoint of royalty! From the standpoint of German royalty!"

The great banker nodded his head. He saw the point.

"My dear sir," continued the detective, "if such a condition should be proved to exist, do you half-realize what would be done about it?"

"You continue, Mr. Carter. You have interested me in spite of my objections to the idea."

"Every act in the life of that young husband who had dared to do what he had done would be traced out and reported, even if months were necessary to accomplish it. The relatives of the princess would determine two things: First, that the princess should be restored to her people, and should, later on, be forced into a marriage in keeping with her station; *and* that the young man must be gotten rid of in such a manner that it would never appear that the two had met at all."

"Well?"

"If in the case that happened on that estate, upon which Trevelyan makes his report—if in this case the husband *was* Maxwell Maxim and the wife *was* the princess, I think I know exactly what would be done."

"What?"

"An opportunity would be awaited when the husband was absent—attending upon his lessons and keeping up the appearance of a student. Then half a dozen secret service officers of the government, sworn to secrecy, would descend upon that house; the princess would be taken from it and sent, under escort, to some convenient castle, where she could be imprisoned until she came to her senses; a dead woman's body would be secured to fit the case, dressed in the clothing of the princess and otherwise prepared so that she would resemble the lady; only the face would be disfigured beyond recognition; and this figure would be left in such a position that the distracted husband would have no doubt at all that the body was his wife's when he should be brought suddenly into its presence.

"Now, that done, the men who had prepared the scene would lie in wait for the coming of the young husband, knowing exactly his hour for making his appearance.

"Every servant in that household would have been already sent to dungeons from which they could never hope to escape. Do you begin to see what I am getting at?"

The banker nodded. He did not speak.

"Let us look at it in the present tense. The hour arrives, the husband appears. He is permitted to enter his house; he is allowed to proceed undisturbed to the very room where the corpse is prepared for him; and then, at the very moment when he is about to throw himself upon the body of the woman he supposes to be his wife, he is seized—seized before he has an opportunity to convince himself that it is not his bride, and while he is still sure that his wife has been foully murdered and lies before him.

"Can you not imagine the stunned condition of his mind at such a moment?

"He would not observe details; he would not think of them.

"He might even struggle desperately with his captors and hurt some of them in his madness.

"But he would be charged with having committed the crime—with having killed his own wife. He would be taken to prison somewhere—and it would be said that he had made his escape.

"It is even possible that he would be permitted to escape, for, believing that his wife was dead, he certainly would never return to Germany. And, being charged with the crime in such a way that he could see no hope of ever being able to prove his innocence, he would hide his identity from everybody—his father, mother, and friends included."

"My God, Carter, but it is awful! The picture you draw is terrible!"

"Yes. But it offers one solution of this mystery."

"If I accept it at all, I must conclude that my son is either now in a dungeon somewhere in the German Empire, or that he is dead—*murdered!*"

"Or that he was allowed to escape."

The old man shook his head.

"I couldn't think that after the picture you have drawn," he said. "But, Carter——"

"Yes?"

"May there not be other suppositions as good as this one?"

"There are many others, sir. But this was no common disappearance. This is no ordinary mystery. There are facts connected with this case that places it within the realm of the extraordinary."

CHAPTER IV.

PUT YOURSELF IN HIS PLACE.

After a considerable pause the detective continued:

"You have received letters and packages, purporting to be forwarded to you by your son, since the time of this disappearance. Now, let me ask if those letters and the addresses on the packages have been in his handwriting?"

"The letters—yes."

"And the packages? That volume of Goethe, for instance. Would you say that he addressed that?"

"Yes."

"Then we are forced to one of two conclusions, presupposing that he is alive."

"And they are——"

"One is that he is a prisoner, and has either been forced to write letters and address packages, which is not likely, or that he has been permitted to do so at his request, which may be likely; and the other is that in making his escape he made arrangements with some friend through whom he forwards them."

"I don't quite understand you."

"What I mean is this: Suppose he did make his escape, and is now, we will say, in South Africa, and suppose that he arranged with some friend to forward to you whatever he might send after he had found a hiding-place. He would only have to write the letters from South Africa and send them to his friend to be remailed to you from Heidelberg; or he would merely enclose an addressed wrapper in an envelope to his friend and ask him to send you such and such a thing."

"But why should he do all that, even supposing your other suppositions to be correct?"

"Mr. Maxim, an innocent man never abandons hope. It is always with him. From what you have said about your son, I gather that he is a young man who would fight to the last ditch."

"I am quite sure of that. He is like me in that respect."

"Then, if he is at liberty and is charged with the crime, he not only hopes, but he is sure, that some day he will succeed in clearing himself."

"That is true enough."

"And he would naturally use every effort in his power to keep you and his mother in ignorance of his trouble just as long as possible."

"Yes; that would also be like him."

"Again, if he has been charged with this crime and then allowed to make his escape, or if he has been charged with the crime and has made his escape, whether it was permitted or not, you can rest assured that the evidence that was manufactured against him was so overwhelming that he believes that even you and his mother would be convinced of his guilt. That would explain why—if he is at liberty—he has not written to you and told you the whole sad story."

"Ah! I am glad that you said that, Carter."

"Now I refer to Trevelyan's report again."

"Yes."

"He says here that Maxwell's friends assert that he never even mentioned to them that he had any idea of taking the trip to Norway. It is stated that he was invited to accompany them, but that he declined. That they had no idea at any time that he cared to go, or that he even considered it. Now, what do you make of that statement?"

"Why, I made nothing of it at all."

"I make a great deal of it, Mr. Maxim."

"What?"

"That there was another place where he desired to pass his summer, but that he did not care to tell you about it, and that, therefore, he used the Norway trip as a cloak to hide his real intentions."

"But such an act is not at all like Maxwell."

"Possibly not—as a rule. But we are presupposing that he had married the princess."

"Oh! I had forgotten that. The idea has seemed so impossible to me that even while you have been talking about it I have not seriously considered it."

"But I seriously consider it. In fact, I regard it as the only tail to this kite."

"You do!"

"Yes. But anyhow let us pursue that subject a little further."

"As you please."

"If the marriage had taken place in January, and he had been forced to pass a great deal of his time at college and about his studies in order to keep up appearances, it follows, does it not, that he was looking forward eagerly to the vacation-time, when he would be free? When he could devote his entire time to his beautiful young wife?"

"Naturally."

"And if the circumstances were as we must suppose them to have been, he could not hope to smuggle the princess out of the country in safety until so long a time had elapsed after her disappearance that all search for her had been abandoned. You admit that?"

"Yes."

"Now, if he took that step of marrying the princess—if the princess took the bit in her teeth and married him—they both knew perfectly well what they were up against."

Mr. Maxim nodded.

"They both knew that *his* life, at least, would not be worth a thaler if they were ever found out; that is, if they were still within the boundaries of the German Empire, and they both realized also that she would be taken away from him instantly and never allowed to see him again, *anyhow*."

"Yes."

"Well, death is a small thing compared to separation in a case of that kind."

"I suppose it is."

"Mr. Maxim, I have always believed in Charles Reade's favorite maxim—I don't intend a pun, sir. You remember what it was?"

"'Put yourself in his place.'"

"Exactly. Now, when I am called upon to study a case of this kind, I invariably begin by putting myself in the other fellow's place, as far as possible."

"It is an excellent idea."

"Shall I tell you what I would have done had I been in the place of your son, supposing him to be in love with the princess and her to be in love with Maxwell?"

"Yes."

"Having obtained her consent to the elopement, and realizing all the great dangers that were bound to follow upon the heels of her disappearance, I would first have fixed the time for the event—just as he appears to have done—to happen either while I was supposed to be out of the country, or immediately after my return to it, so that it would not, or could not, be associated with me.

"Before that time I would have arranged the nest for her and feathered it."

"I don't understand."

"Maxwell came home to you at Christmas-time, didn't he?"

"Yes."

"Trevelyan's report says that Castle Craig—which is the English translation of the German name he gives the estate where the young woman was murdered—was prepared for occupancy, and was supposedly occupied, even after the beginning of the November before that time. This would amount to a fatal error in his report were it not for the fact that he explains it later that his researches afterward led him to the supposition that the couple were not actually married until the last week in January. Now, he does not state what those researches actually were, or how and when he came to that conclusion. I have decided, therefore, that Trevelyan and I came to the same decision about that matter."

"What is that?"

"Why, that the castle, so called, *was* prepared for occupancy in November, and that the impression *was* given out that it was occupied by the purchaser and his bride at that time; *but* that the couple were not actually married and did not go there to live, and *that the princess did not disappear* until January. Don't you see?"

"Yes."

"That brings me back again to what I would do if I were in his place under such circumstances."

"Well?"

"I would know that I must create a blind, and an effectual one, too."

"Yes."

"I would have purchased and prepared the place, just as we will suppose he did; I would have gone to any lengths in order to give the impression that it was occupied for months before the elopement—just as we will suppose he did again."

"Go on."

"I would have known, as he doubtless knew, that it would be impossible to smuggle the princess across the border. I would have known that the safest place to conceal her would be quite near to her home; and I would have known that she must live there in entire seclusion until all search for her had ceased.

"I would have done another thing, too. I would have made it appear, at the time of her flight, that she had committed suicide, or had been accidentally drowned. We don't know if he thought of that, however."

"No."

"With everything arranged, with the time set for her flight, with a perfect understanding concerning how I should meet my sweetheart at the proper time, and with every detail of the flight and what was to follow it agreed upon, I would have taken that very trip to America—as Maxwell did."

"You are beginning to bring me around to your belief about the matter, Carter."

"I would have returned to Germany incognito. There is, of course, the difficulty about his passports, but a little money well applied would have covered that trouble."

"Yes."

"I would have arranged it so that it would appear as though I was still on the ocean, on my way to Germany, at the time of the flight of the princess—and I shouldn't wonder if we would ultimately discover that he did hire somebody to cross under his name by a later steamer than the one he actually sailed on."

"Go on."

"In that way, even if it were remembered that he and

the princess had ever known each other, a few inquiries would have set at rest any doubts connected with him; it would be found that he was on the ocean at the time of her disappearance."

"Humph! You are making a regular Machiavelli of him. Go on."

"I would have promised her, and she would have promised me, that our affairs were to have no sharers in the secrets. I would not tell my own father or mother until I could proudly take my wife to them. An older head would have known that such a plot could never succeed inside the boundaries of the German Empire: young heads do not regard impossibilities as being more than impediments."

"That is right enough."

"Now, let us advance a big step."

"Well?"

"The day of discovery comes. I go to my home to find—as I believe—my wife dead. I am charged with her murder. A thousand things which you and I cannot even conjecture upon happen to me. I am permitted to escape, or I make my escape somehow, and I resolve upon two things: Vengeance against those who killed my bride, and proof which will convict others of the awful crime of which I stand charged. Do you suppose that I would take even my own father into my confidence until I had consummated those two vows? *Not much!*"

CHAPTER V.

NICK CARTER'S EARNEST PROMISE.

It was at this point in the interview when the millionaire made the remark with which we began this story—when the detective lighted a fresh cigar and leaned back in his chair.

"All right," he said. "I think we can find your son, if he is alive. But right here we must ask ourselves a different class of questions."

"Wait a moment, Mr. Carter. I want to ask you a question."

"Well?"

"Don't you think that Maxwell is alive? Do you think that he has been murdered?"

"That is an extremely difficult question to answer. You are a strong man, and therefore I will speak unreservedly, for we may as well look upon the dark side as upon the light side of the case. It will be better for us to view it from all sides."

"I think so, sir."

"Then I will reply to you in this way:

"Under certain circumstances—that is, if Maxwell Marlow were not the heir of your millions—if he were the son of any man less well known in Germany than you are—I should say that he would have been put to death *at once*."

"But why should my son escape where others would suffer?"

"In the first place, he has not escaped the consequences of his act against the code of royalty. He has, at least, disappeared, whether he was forced to do so of his own will because of the circumstantial evidence against him, or is detained. I say that another man's son would have been murdered, where your son might have been spared, and you ask me why."

"Yes."

"The answer is obvious. You are at the head of one of the greatest banking-houses in the world. Your house has millions upon millions invested in Germany and in German securities. You are a power in that land, as well as in this one—a greater one there than here, because Germany is likely at any moment to have more need of you than the United States ever will."

"That is true."

"If Germany should go to war to-morrow your house would be applied to for money—or it would be some other house with which you could exert great influence. Germany would not wish to have you for an enemy."

"You are right there! But by——"

"Hold on, now. Don't go off half-cocked. Don't set fire to your bridge until you have crossed it."

"All right. Go on."

"That is why I do not believe that your son is dead. I don't think they would quite dare to murder him, if his silence concerning the princess could be secured in any other way. Then there are the letters. While they might have been forged, to keep you in ignorance, it is hardly likely."

"I agree with you there."

"So I think that, everything considered, we will work on the supposition that he is alive."

"Carter, you are a long time in giving me hope, but when you do it you accomplish it in a manner that is convincing."

"That is what I have sought to do. The hope that succeeds despair is far more wholesome and lasting than the hope that has no logic to build upon."

"Yes, sirree!"

"Well, here is more hope for you that is built upon logic."

"What is it?"

"If Maxwell were a prisoner somewhere in Germany, and was compelled, or even permitted, to write to you and his mother and to send presents, it is likely that an effort would be made to impress you with some idea concerning him. For example, that he had gotten into some sort of trouble and had fled the country—that he was in hiding somewhere—he must in that regard."

"That seems reasonable."

"While it might be that they would seek to impress you with the idea that he was still attending to his studies, they would know that it could not be a long time before you would find out that he was missing."

"Sure."

"We must therefore conclude that he has made his escape, or has been permitted to escape. You must remember that if he were a prisoner in Germany now his jailers would know nothing of his customary methods of communicating with you; *but if he is free, and is hoping to carry out some such vows as I have outlined, he would be apt to write exactly as he has written.*

"You see, *he* would know just how much and how little in his letters would satisfy you. *He* would know that the constant remembrances to his mother would keep you in a state of content concerning him; and *he* would be the last one in the world to tell you of his own disgrace—for he would so regard it—principally for the reason that he hopes with every day to clear up the mystery that engulfs him. What sort of a looking chap is he? Have you a photograph of him?"

"Yes. Right here."

The banker took a photograph from the drawer of his desk and passed it to Nick.

It was the picture of a remarkably handsome young man, and as Nick Carter studied it intently he remarked:

"Mr. Maxim, there is a fine young man. He has a good head. He is very determined and very proud. He doesn't know what it means to give up beaten. Do you know what I think about him since I have looked upon this picture?"

"No. Tell me."

"I think, first, that he married the princess; second, that he made his own escape after he was set upon by his enemies; and, third, that he is at this moment in Germany, working night and day to succeed in the two tasks he has set for himself."

"Do you really suppose all that, Carter?"

"I do."

"Thank God! You give me courage."

"Tell me one thing, Mr. Maxim."

"Well?"

"In the beginning you stated that you had engaged the police of London, Paris, and Berlin upon the search for your son. How has that search been conducted?"

"For one thing, it has been pursued with the utmost secrecy."

"That is what I meant; and I am very glad that it has."

"I impressed upon the members of my firm in each of those cities the fact that I wished no noise whatever made about the disappearance. I believed that success would come to us more quickly if we acted quietly, and I dreaded being flooded with a whole lot of letters from people offering their services in the search for him."

"Good!"

"Everything that has been done by the French and the German police in this matter has been done through our French and German branches. I have not appeared personally in the matter at all."

"All the better."

"In the case of Trevelyan I once had occasion to make use of his services myself, and I remembered him as being a very efficient man, so in communicating with our London house I directed that the case be placed in his hands. That explains why his is the only complete report I have had—is the only report, in fact, that has been made directly to me."

"Now, what have the Paris detectives had to say?"

"Merely that no trace of him has been found. They all agree that Maxwell did not go to Norway."

"What have the Berlin detectives had to say?"

"The same thing as the Frenchmen."

"Am I to understand that Trevelyan is the only one who connects your son with the tragedy at Castle Craig?"

"Yes."

"It has not been suggested either by the French or the German police?"

"No."

"They agree, do they, in stating that it is an unaccountable disappearance, and that no trace of him can be discovered?"

"Yes."

"And they hint—at what?"

"Nothing in particular. Everything is vague."

"Well, don't you see that this exactly carries out what I said in the first place?"

"Just what do you mean?"

"That the Germans very much prefer that Carl von Krebs should not be confused with Maxwell Maxim. The police know it, all right, but they do not propose that you shall know it if you can be kept from finding it out. Official Berlin and official Paris knows it, all right, but official Paris and Berlin do not propose that you shall know it. That was a happy idea of yours in sending Trevelyan—a man whom you know—to the scene."

"But, if Trevelyan discovered so much, is it not rather strange that he did not find out still more?"

"As what, for instance?"

"Why, the flight of the princess; the——"

"My dear sir, you are forgetting."

"Forgetting what?"

"That it is not likely that half a dozen people in the whole world know that a princess has eloped, or that the murder at Castle Craig was even remotely connected with one."

"That is so."

"We are only guessing at that, for the reason that we know that Maxwell has met a princess in rather a romantic manner. Not even the Berlin secret police would know about the affair of the princess. They would know that for some reason the disappearance of Maxwell Maxim had become a state affair, but their knowledge would go no further than that."

"I see."

"If Trevelyan had even heard the whisper about a princess I have no doubt that he would have put two and two together and decided just as I have done. Tell me exactly what were your instructions to him."

"I directed him to go to Heidelberg and to make every effort in his power to obtain some trace of Maxwell, but that on no account was he to make a report on the matter to anybody but me; that, no matter what he discovered, he was to take no action until he had communicated with me, and——"

"That was excellent. The German police sent down from Berlin and the Paris police never even knew that he was there."

"I don't suppose they did."

"Frankfurt and Stuttgart are the nearest large cities to Heidelberg. It is about midway between them. Berlin is five or six hundred miles away, or more."

"Yes."

"Well, if Trevelyan had told all he suspected he would have complicated the case. As it is, it looks as if it would be fairly easy—from my standpoint. I shall sail this afternoon at three o'clock, Mr. Maxim."

"God bless you, Carter!"

"I will go from here direct to London, to see Trevelyan. I shall doubtless take him to Germany with me."

"And you will find and save my son. I know it."

"Yes. I will find and save your son. I believe it."

"God bless you, Carter!"

"And if the princess is his wife, I will find her and save her, too!"

CHAPTER VI.

NICK CARTER AND PENRYN TREVELYAN.

When the detective arrived in London he despatched a messenger at once to Penryn Trevelyan with a letter in which he stated that he had arrived that morning from America, and that he had come direct from Porter Maxim, and in which he requested the Scotland Yard detective to call upon him at Lovell's Hotel, in Dover Street, with as little delay as possible.

Nick had scarcely settled himself to the enjoyment of an after-luncheon cigar when Trevelyan presented himself and was ushered at once to the detective's room. Trevelyan was a man of medium size, and he had the appearance of a Sunday-school superintendent who seriously felt the weight of his responsibilities.

He was spare in build, wiry in his movements, alert in his manner, calm and self-possessed in his attitude. His voice was low but distinct, and his entire personality at once inspired Nick Carter with confidence.

Not a word more than ordinary salutations passed between them until they were alone in the room, with the door closed behind them; and then Nick again extended his hand and said:

"I am very glad to make your acquaintance, Trevelyan. I think we will work together without a hitch, so let us be friends at once without waiting for the usual time to become acquainted."

"By Jove, Carter!" was the instant reply, followed by a sincere pressure of the hand that was extended to him. "That is the way I like to have things said to me. I have always wished to know you. Will you show me your letter to me from Maxim?"

Nick smiled and produced the letter, and waited in silence while his new friend hastily glanced through it. Then, when Trevelyan had put the letter in his pocket, he said:

"Trevelyan, I may say, to start with, that Mr. Maxim is greatly pleased with the work you did for him in this case; and now it is his wish, at my suggestion, that you and I should go to Germany together. I wish to ask you first if you can get a leave of absence from the Yard to go with me."

Trevelyan smiled, showing his even, white teeth.

"I have anticipated that idea," he replied. "I applied for the leave and got it before I came here to meet you. I am foot-free, Mr. Carter, for as long a time as you can make use of me."

"Tut, tut!" said Nick. "We are to work together in this affair. We will make use of each other, instead of one of us using the other. We will start on even ground and work side by side through the case; and you need not bother to say 'Mr. Carter,' if you please. When you wish to attract my attention just say 'Nick!' and I will answer."

"Good! Thank you. My best friends call me Pen. It's an abbreviation of Penryn. How is that for a Cornwall name, eh? Penryn Trevelyan! By Tre, Pol, and Pen you know the Cornishmen; eh?"

"You certainly did hail from the chalk-cliffs, didn't you? Now, when can you be ready to start for Germany?"

"As soon as I can get upon my feet from this chair. I am ready now. However, we have two hours before it will be necessary to start for the station."

"Very good. We will use those two hours in comparing notes, so that we may start even."

"Yes."

"You have had one advantage which has not accrued

to me, although I have read your very clear report on the case; I have had one advantage which you did not possess, in that I have had an opportunity for a very comprehensive discussion with Maxwell Maxim's father."

Trevelyan nodded.

"So I think," continued Nick, "that if we dovetail our experiences we will find that we have quite a clear case."

"I am glad that you have something which makes it appear clear to you. I will confess that I ran up against a blind lead which stopped me as suddenly as if I were against the great wall of China."

"Yes. I know that. May I ask you some questions?"

"Sure. Go ahead."

"You are positive, are you not, that Carl von Krebs and Maxwell Maxim were one and the same?"

"Quite so. I haven't the least doubt of it."

"Are you quite as confident that the marriage of two persons which took place during the last week of January of last year was *his* wedding?"

"Yes."

"Also, that the people who lived at Castle Craig wished it to be believed that they had been married in the month of November previous to that, and had lived in that house quietly from that time?"

"Yes."

"Was your opinion concerning the true time of the marriage adopted by others?"

"I think I was the only one who searched it out; or, if others knew about it, they kept it religiously to themselves."

"Exactly. That, you will find, is just what they did do."

Trevelyan did not reply to this.

"Now," said Nick, "tell me what sort of efforts you made to trace the identity of the murdered bride."

"I made every effort that I could, but they were absolutely without result."

"What was the name that was stated in the marriage-register you saw?"

"Wanda Lysart."

"Did you discover anything about her which led you to form an opinion as to her nationality?"

"Yes: several intangible things; nothing really important; but I did get the idea that she was French, and that she had been, perhaps, on the stage. But, really, Nick, my report was as complete as I could make it. I don't think that I can now add to it in any way. That is, I could not add any facts. Whatever I might say in addition would be purely in the line of conjecture."

"I find," said Nick in reply, "that in a case of this sort conjecture will sometimes carry a fellow a good way toward the solution of a problem."

"Yes?"

"For example, I have formed a conjecture, based upon a very small and apparently insignificant circumstance regarding the identity of the bride."

"It resulted, I suppose, from your talk with the father?"

"Yes."

"I thought of that many times. If I had had him where I could have discussed the matter with him, and could have discovered something about young Maxim's sweethearts——"

"That was a subject upon which the old man is utterly ignorant."

"Then I don't see how——"

"I will tell you."

"Please."

"I first questioned him rather closely about the characteristics of his son. I discovered that Maxwell has always been a reticent youth, particularly on the subject of his young women friends. He was—or is——"

"I think it is *was*, Nick."

"Do you mean to tell me that you believe Maxwell Maxim is dead?"

"No. I believe he is alive; but I also believe that he is dead to everybody who ever knew him."

"That means that you believe that he killed his wife, doesn't it?"

"Yes."

Nick pondered a moment. Then he said:

"Trevelyan, I do not at all blame you for having arrived at that decision, for the reason that I know how meager were the points you had to work upon. To you it was like a proposition in algebra, where A plus By, divided by B and added to Aby, equaled the uncertain quantity X; eh?"

"Just about that."

"Well, let me tell you something. In pursuing my mode of questioning the old man I found that Maxwell went home, as you know, a year ago last Christmas."

"Yes."

"While he was there a dinner-party was given in his honor, and at the table one of his old chums began to guy him about his living abroad, and made the remark that he supposed the day was not far off when Maxwell would be bringing home a German bride. His reply to that was that he had never but once while he had been in that country seen a woman for whom he would give a picayune—or words to that effect."

"Uh-huh!" remarked Trevelyan, if that sort of a grunt can be called a remark.

"Again, in the same bantering manner, he was asked if the kaiser had invited him to breakfast, or something like that, to which he responded that he had never met but one person of royal blood. That was a princess; only the trouble was that he had not known her to be a princess until after—and some time after—he parted with her. He had rescued her when she was lost in

the mountains, and all that. Do you see the possibilities of that incident?"

"Very plainly."

"Now, if you had had that to work upon when you began on this case, would you not have made use of the information?"

"I certainly should—to the extent of discovering, if possible, the identity of that particular princess."

"Exactly—*and that is the very first thing we will have to do when we get to Germany.*"

Trevelyan nodded.

"I see," he said. "You did have an unquestionable advantage over me, Carter."

"In that particular, yes; also, in being able to learn definitely about the character and habits of young Maxim. I will tell you now that from all I can learn he is an unusually intelligent chap, smart, keen, full of spirit, handsome, strong, six feet two in his stockings, is not afraid of anything that lives, moves, or breathes, honorable and upright in his dealings, and has never been given to any bad habits at all. He is reticent, has an unforgiving temper when once it is aroused—only it is not easily aroused. In a word, he is not at all the sort of chap who would kill a woman under any kind of provocation, although he might be content to wait years in order to kill a man who had wronged him."

"I see," Trevelyan repeated.

"Now, Pen—as you have asked me to address you—*you* are positive that Carl von Krebs was Maxwell Maxim; and I am positive that, if he *was* Maxim, the unknown princess was his mate in that nest he arranged at Castle Craig."

"Then it was a princess who was murdered; and, if that were true, wouldn't there have been a whole lot more fu——"

"Not at all. The princess was not murdered, according to my theory. The princess is still alive."

"But who *was* the dead lady, then?"

"A substitute. The princess' French maid, doubtless, since you are of the opinion that the dead woman was French."

"A substitute! By Jove, Nick!"

"See the point?"

"You bet I do!"

"Tell me just in what way you see it."

"You mean that Maxim stole the princess; she disappeared; he took her to that house to keep her there until the search should be over; her people found it out; they took her away; they may have had the maid murdered and dressed the body in the princess' clothing; Maxim believed that it was his wife's body that he saw, and——"

"Precisely, you and I will work together beautifully. You see through the thing at once," interrupted Nick Carter.

CHAPTER VII.

LAYING PLANS FOR THE CAMPAIGN.

Trevelyan jumped to his feet and thrust out his hand.

"Nick," he said, "that remark of yours about the substitute is like turning on the electric lights in a dark room. It makes everything clear. What a dolt I was not to have guessed that there was something of that kind involved in this affair!"

"Not at all, Pen. There was one word that you needed to work upon; and you didn't have that word."

"You mean the word 'princess'!"

"Yes."

"It opens up an entirely new case, doesn't it?"

"It does."

"I would like to tell you what my idea was about the case, as far as I had gone."

"I wish you would do so."

"First, after discovering that Maxim did not go on that trip to Norway, and had not thought of doing so at all, although he had so informed his father, I looked up information about him concerning his life at college, his habits, and all that."

"Yes."

"I discovered much of what you tell me, only that he was never what you would call a saint."

"He was just an ordinary young man who is out for a good time, but who carried with him always a certain degree of rectitude from which he did not depart."

"Exactly. Well, when I connected him with that Castle Craig affair, and then by careful and exhaustive inquiry discovered that the servants in that house had been imported, that they were mostly French, with a sprinkling of English, I came to the conclusion that the wife must have been French, also."

"That was natural."

"A famous beauty of the chorus-girl variety disappeared mysteriously from Paris at about that time. Without any proof whatever, I decided to my own satisfaction that she was the woman in the case. Now, after that I had nothing to go upon but conjecture based upon the very few facts in my possession."

"Yes."

"So I figured it out that there was another man in the case, and that Maxim, in a fit of jealous rage, had killed his wife and fled the country."

"And in that way you fell plunk into the trap that the princess' people had arranged."

"Sure. But let me continue."

"Go on."

"I had made up my mind that young Maxim would never be heard of again, unless he was discovered by accident, either in that great West of your own country, in Africa, or in some out-of-the-way corner of the

world. That is what I had determined to tell you when I received your message this morning."

"And now all that is changed, eh?"

"I should say so."

"It is my belief, Trevelyan, that young Maxim is at this moment in Germany."

"I can hardly agree with you there—and yet it may be so."

"I will give you my reasons for thinking so."

"Please."

"We must first accept the theory that his bride was the princess whom he rescued in the mountains, whom he was determined to meet again, and whom he did meet, arranging it to happen by accident at first, and later, with her consent, by design, until the affair culminated in an elopement."

"I am more than willing to accept that theory—at least until we have worked it out."

"Now, you have had a great deal of experience in lands that are ruled by kings, queens, and emperors. You know how jealous they are of their blood; you know to what extreme measures they would go in a case of this kind."

"Indeed I do know. They would stop at nothing—not for a moment at the killing of an innocent maid and dressing the body in the clothing of her mistress."

"Exactly. You know, also, with what devilish ingenuity and patience they would work until everything was ready for the final blow."

"Yes."

"That brings us to the point where the princess was stolen away from her new home and where the corpse of another woman was substituted for her."

"Yes."

"We will say that it was a partly darkened room; that Maxim was permitted to enter that room and find her, but that he was pounced upon before he could discover that it was not the body of his bride that was stretched in front of him. He is dragged away to prison, and it is made clear to him that the proof that *he* committed the terrible deed is overwhelming. He is kept long enough to permit these things to work deeply into his mind. He is allowed to brood over them until he comes to the conclusion that the only way in which he will ever be able to clear himself will be to find the really guilty party—and *all this time—even until this moment—it has never occurred to him that his wife is not dead.*"

Trevelyan gave an emphatic nod.

"After that one of two things happens. He is permitted an opportunity to escape, or he somehow makes his escape without the opportunity being offered." And here Nick told about the letters and packages supposed to have been forwarded to America by the young man since the crime was committed. "Now," he added, "having made his escape, his entire life would be, from that moment, devoted to two purposes."

"Yes. To prove his innocence and to revenge."

"Precisely. And to accomplish either he would have to remain in Germany."

"Sure. You are right, Nick. Maxwell Maxim is at this moment somewhere near the scene of his strange experiences. There is only one point in your theory about which I see room for serious doubt."

"That is concerning whether he is now at liberty or not."

"Yes."

"I have thought it all over many times, and I have made up my mind to work on that hypothesis."

"Yes; it is the one to work upon, without doubt; but, all the same, we must not conceal from ourselves the truth that he may be dead at this moment. They might have murdered him when they killed the substitute."

"I cannot accept that idea at all, simply for the reason that he is the son of his father. Porter Maxim is a great power in the world. If his son were murdered, and the fact were ever discovered——"

"Yes. Still, they may have kept him imprisoned, and have managed that letter and package business themselves somehow."

"That is quite true—only it does not appeal to me as being at all likely."

"You prefer the theory that he is at this moment at liberty?"

"I do."

"Then we will accept it, for the present at least, as a fact. Now, what is the next thing to do?"

"We will go from here to Berlin."

"Berlin is five hundred miles and more from——"

"I know that, but there is information to be obtained in Berlin which we could find nowhere else. Our first care must be to make a study of all the members of the royal and semiroyal families. We must know about and trace out the histories of every young woman who lives or visits inside the boundaries of that empire, who has even the ghost of a right to the title of princess."

"Lord, Nick, there are slews of them!"

"I know it. But the point is that we will find Maxwell Maxim more quickly in that way than in any other."

"That is true."

"If the theories we have decided to adopt are the correct ones he will not be far from the place where she lived; he will have a pretty good idea who instigated the murder. If we trace out the identity of the princess we will be a long way toward finding him, and helping him, as well."

"He may have discovered by this time that she is alive."

"That is possible, but it is not probable. Her rein-

tives would keep her in entire seclusion for a long time. She would be in a convent, or imprisoned in a castle, or kept somewhere so that she could not be found."

"But her relatives would never let it be supposed that she is dead."

"Certainly not. But if Maxim is certain in his own mind that he saw her dead body with his own eyes, all the reports in the world that she was alive and in temporary seclusion would have no effect whatever upon him. He would not spend his time looking for her; he would be looking for her murderer."

"Right."

"Now, how much time have we got before we must start for the station?"

"Another hour."

"Then let us employ it in driving around to see the editor and publisher of Burke's Peerage. I fancy that in that office we will be likely to discover somebody who will make us out such a list as we want concerning German princesses."

"That's a happy thought, Nick. I know just the man. He is employed there. Come along."

"If you know just the man for the work," said Nick, "you go there alone and attend to it. Make it appear that Scotland Yard wants the information. Pay liberally for the list. Tell your friend that we wish a list in full of every family where there is a young woman who has any claim whatever to the title of princess—of every name in full of any and every princess who lives in Germany, and also who visited Germany during that year."

"It will take him two or three days—possibly longer—to make up the list."

"To be sure. Instruct him to send it by mail to—Nay; by special messenger—that will be better and safer—to Lord Angus MacGraw, at Berlin."

Trevelyan showed his white teeth in a smile and shrugged his shoulders.

"What's the game, Nick?" he asked. "I don't know Lord Angus personally. In fact, I don't know that I ever saw him to recognize him; but I know that there is such a man, and that he has a reputation for doing sensational things once in awhile. That reputation extends rather generally over Europe, too. Is he going with us?"

"He is going to be your traveling companion; and if you are willing you will be his secretary during the trip."

"Eh? Willing? Of course. I am willing to do any old thing you suggest. But what is the game, as a cockney would put the question?"

"This: Lord Angus is one of my old-time friends, and, fortunately for the present business, we bear a marked resemblance to each other. It is so marked, in fact, that with a few slight touches I can make myself look so much like him that I could impose upon his own servants, if I wished. I did it once, as a joke, at his shooting-box in Scotland."

"It is a capital idea, Nick. Where is he now?"

"He is in America, traveling as plain Mr. MacGraw. He won't be back here for six months or more, and in the meantime I have his permission to use his name to any extent that pleases me. I saw him just before I started. I talked the whole matter over with him—and in the passenger-list of the steamer that brought me over I am registered as Angus MacGraw."

"That is bully, old chap!"

"So you will be Jock McAllister, his secretary. Now, skip. I'll meet you at the station."

"All right. I'll be on hand."

CHAPTER VIII.

TRACKING DOWN A PRINCESS.

We will now pass over an interval during which Nick accompanied by Penryn Trevelyan, established themselves comfortably in Berlin, and where they were at once recognized as Lord Angus MacGraw and his secretary, Mr. McAllister.

A word, too, regarding the reputation in European cities of that same peer, familiarly known among his intimates—and they were legion—as Lord Angy.

Lord Angy was known as somewhat of an eccentric—as a pronounced high-roller, who loved to do impossible things; as a man who stopped at nothing if he wished to perpetrate a joke; as a person in whom anything was excusable. There are such persons everywhere in the world, who are only smiled upon indulgently when they commit deeds which in another would be roundly condemned.

Furthermore—and this was, doubtless, one of the reasons for the excuses that were made for him—he was known to be enormously rich. He spent money like water everywhere he went; and if he could find an original way to get rid of it he invariably adopted that method.

We can see at once that this was just the character for Nick Carter to assume; and, so far as the spending of money was concerned, the multimillionaire in New York had placed an unlimited credit at Nick's disposal.

We have seen already how Mr. Maxim told Nick that he would regard a check for a million dollars as a mere bagatelle in this matter; and Nick was resolved to spend a million, if it should be necessary in order to accomplish the purpose which had taken him to Germany.

And so when he settled in Berlin for a time he took an expensive furnished mansion, he filled it with servants, and he deposited money enough with two or three

bankers there to make them open their eyes in amazement.

They had been there almost a week when the list for which Trevelyan had made arrangement before their departure from London arrived, and already Lord Angy had succeeded in getting himself very much talked about as a spendthrift who had taken a new course of procedure since his last visit to the German capital—a course which the Germans shrewdly suspected would have bankrupted a man less wealthy.

It was a Saturday evening when Nick and Trevelyan seated themselves together in the library of the house where they lived to study over the list that had been received that day; and it covered, in all its ramifications, explanations, and notes about collateral relatives, fifty pages of foolscap paper.

Nick uttered a low whistle when he looked upon it, and Trevelyan grinned.

"Have we got to learn all that by heart, Nick?" he asked.

"Wait a minute before we begin," replied Nick. "What did you say was the name given in the marriage-register of the woman you believe married Maxim?"

"Wanda Lysart."

"And what was the name of the groom as given in the register?"

"Maximillian Carl von Krebs."

"Humph! That Maxim—illian sounds significant, doesn't it?"

"I thought so."

"The lad managed to work his own name into the register in full by merely adding six letters to it."

"That is the way I figured it out."

"Then don't you think that the bride must also have worked some of her own names into it, too? You see, those princes and princesses usually have about a dozen baptismal names; eh?"

"Yes."

"Such as 'Edgar Paul Johan Philip Adolph Maybe-not-till Stuttgart,' eh?"

"Good!" replied Trevelyan, laughing.

"Well, Pen, you take half of these sheets and I will take the other half. Look through them until you find a name which somewhere contains either 'Wanda' or 'Lysart.' When you discover such a name make a reference note of it; I will do the same."

"Right."

"Don't speak until you are through. Then we will compare notes."

It was fully half an hour before either spoke again. Then Nick inquired:

"How many Wandas did you find, Pen?"

"Six. Shall I read them?"

"Yes. How many Lysarts?"

"None at all."

"Well, I have found three Wandas and no Lysarts at all. I suppose the Lysart was just a haphazard name, the same as Von Krebs; eh?"

"Yes. But we have nine Wandas altogether."

"All right. Now, go through your Wandas and eliminate all that are married and all that are more than twenty-five years old."

"Wait a minute, Nick. The lad might have fallen in love with a woman who is older than that."

"I don't think so. Stick to the twenty-five, anyhow, for the present. Let us see what we find."

Again there was silence for a time, and then:

"Well?" asked Nick.

"I have three out of my six," replied Trevelyan.

"And I have two out of my three," said Nick.

"That reduces the nine to five."

"Good! Now, take the old German State of Baden. Heidelberg is in Baden, isn't it? Or somewhere near the border?"

"It is in Baden; yes."

"See how many Wandas you can find who were in that part of the country two years ago. I will do the same." A little later he added:

"How many have you found that fills that bill?"

"Only one."

"And I have found one, also."

"That reduces the number to two."

"Hold on. Not so fast. Now, look at your visiting-list. See if there isn't a Wanda or two who visited in that part of the country that summer. Or who has an uncle or an aunt who lives in that section. I'll do the same."

"I have found one such as you mention," said Trevelyan, after another pause.

"And I haven't found any at all. That fixes us at three Wandas."

"Yes."

"Well, I have only one to report upon. She is twenty-five years old and is a real princess, all right. Something tells me that she is not the one we want. Tell me about yours."

"One is twenty-four, another is twenty-six——"

"Oh, never mind her!"

"And this last one is nineteen."

"Is that the one who visited there in that part of the country?"

"She spends her summers there with her uncle, who is the Graf von Buhlmach. In the winter she lives with her maternal aunt——"

"Never mind that part of it."

"But the wedding took place in the winter."

"That makes no difference. If she spends her summers in—— Where did she spend that summer, anyhow?"

"Shall I give the German name for the castle, or——"

"No. Give us the translation."

"The place is called Thunder Tower, if it were English. It is near a small place called Heilbenn, and Heilbenn is only about ten miles from the outskirts of Heidelberg. I happen to know that, for I have been there. I know the place well, in fact. Every by-path and every lane, every nook and corner. I may as well tell you at once that I went to Heidelberg when I was twenty years old and that I had a sweetheart in Heilbenn at the time."

"Splendid! And you say that that particular Wanda is only nineteen years old?"

"Yes."

"And is a full-fledged princess?"

"She is what is called a princess by courtesy. Her mother was a princess of royal blood; her father was——"

"That's enough. She is the one we are after, Pen. Make your play on that proposition. Now, what is her full name?"

"Theresa Constantina Augusta Wanda von Combroch, called Princess Theresa."

"Good! We will look for the Princess Theresa—at least until we are certain that she is not the one we want—and I think she is. Now, Pen, our next move is to put aside these papers and give our attention to finding out all there is to know about the history and career of Wanda von Combroch, otherwise known as Princess Theresa."

"Right."

"The question is, where shall we search for the information? I confess that I don't know much about that part of it here in Germany."

"But I do."

"You are invaluable, Pen. Tell me how."

"I have a friend here in Berlin—he was a classmate of mine at Heidelberg and is now a colonel in the German cavalry; he belongs to one of the best families of old Prussia—who is a perfect mine of information about such things. What time has it got to be?"

"Ten o'clock."

"Good! Get on your hat and go out with me. I know exactly where to find my friend at this hour. He is a confirmed bachelor and he spends his evenings at a sort of officers' club, where they keep alive all the old habits of ancient days. He is sure to be there."

The carriage was ordered around, and soon thereafter "Lord Angy" and his secretary were on their way to the club in question; but when they were almost there Nick suddenly bethought himself of a fault in their method of procedure.

"Look here, Trevelyan," he said. "We have forgotten one thing."

"What is that?"

"Why! If your Colonel—— What's his name?"

"Von Uhler."

"Well, if Colonel Von Uhler knows who you are he will have to know who I am, and that will mean that somebody here will suspect that I am not Lord Angus MacGraw. Now, I don't want that to happen. I wish to carry out this disguise to the end—*absolutely.*"

"Nothing will be easier, Nick," laughed Trevelyan.

"How do you make it?"

"In the first place, Eitel von Uhler has no idea that I am a detective. He believes that I am a king's messenger. I can easily explain to him why I am posing for the present as a secretary to a Scottish peer. He will never suspect that you are other than you appear to be."

"If you are quite sure of that, go ahead."

"I am positive of it. We will even discuss it in his presence. He is a capital fellow, and if it were necessary I should not hesitate to take him entirely into our confidence."

"I wouldn't care to do that—quite."

"He would be as safe as a church. He is the soul of honor and a rattling good fellow."

"All right. Go ahead. Only, remember that I don't want anything to interfere with my identity as Lord Angus MacGraw so long as I am on German soil."

"And nothing shall. You may trust me."

"All right. Let 'er go."

CHAPTER IX.

THE STORY OF THE PRINCESS WANDA.

When Trevelyan sent his card to Colonel Von Uhler he wrote upon the back of it this message:

"MY DEAR EITEL: When you come out to see me you may call me by my first name, all right, but for reasons of state, which I will explain later on, my last name is for the present McAllister. I am at present temporarily in the service of Lord Angus MacGraw, another fact which I will explain when opportunity offers. PENRYN."

In less than two minutes the colonel came into the reception-room and grasped Trevelyan by the hand, tearing the card into bits as he did so.

He was a tall, strapping fellow—a typical officer of the German cavalry—and, as Nick Carter thought to himself as he looked at him, "every inch a man."

"How are you, Pen?" he exclaimed, in perfect English. "You are about the last chap whom I expected to see this night. And I'm thoroughly glad that you looked me up, too. It is insufferably dull here this evening. There seems to be nobody around. Again, how are you?"

"Never better, Eitel. Glad to see you, too. Let me present you to my friend Lord Angus MacGraw."

"Glad to make your acquaintance, Lord Angus," said

Uhler cordially. "I knew that you were in the city, but I had no idea that my old friend was with you. Pen and I were at Heidelberg together once."

"Yes. He has told me as much."

"Come inside and taste some of the best beer in the world. You will find the rooms almost deserted to-night, though."

They were presently seated comfortably and chatting together in the most cordial manner, for none knows better than a German officer how to play the host when he is minded to do so.

Nick thought it best to leave the purpose of their call entirely to Trevelyan, since under the circumstances he would know best how to go about it, and therefore he presently left the table and began to examine the hundreds of quaint drawings, cartoons, and sketches with which the walls of the room were covered.

"This is a hobby of mine," he called back to them. "I will leave you two to talk over old times for half an hour while I amuse myself with these pictures. I could ask no greater enjoyment than this."

And he meant it, too, when the drawings were as excellent as these were.

Meanwhile, at the table, Trevelyan began presently upon the topic that interested him; but he approached it gingerly, as we will see.

"I suppose you get down around the old place occasionally, Eitel," he said; and the reply surprised him, for Von Uhler said:

"I have been going to Heilbenn every summer, for a week or two, until last year and this one;" and he sighed as he made the statement.

Trevelyan laughed.

"I remember Heilbenn very well," he said. "It is only a few miles from Heidelberg. You should remember what used to take me there? Eh?"

"Yes. The sweet little Bertha. I remember how mad you were over her."

"Do tell me what has become of her, Eitel?"

"Why, she married somebody. I don't know who it was, right away after you left. Did you never know that? However, I don't suppose you took the trouble to inquire. Probably this is the first time you have thought about her at all in years. Confess, now."

"I am afraid it is. But what in the world takes you to Heilbenn every summer; eh?"

"I have just told you that I have not been there for two summers, now. But I didn't stop at Heilbenn. I visited on the estate of Herr Graf von Buhlmach. Castle Thunder is the name of the place, in English." He sighed again, more profoundly than before, but Trevelyan thought it best to let the sigh pass unnoticed for the present.

"Castle Thunder! Graf von Buhlmach!" he exclaimed, as if the mention of the two names had revived an indistinct recollection. "Why! That is the place where I——" He stopped.

"Where you what?" asked the colonel, with great interest. "I was not aware that you ever knew the people there."

"I didn't. But—let me think. How long ago was it that we were there, Eitel, at old Heidelberg?"

"It is twelve years, Pen. I wish you would explain what the devil you are talking about."

"Why, it is this: I was fortunate enough once upon a time, when I was out for a tramp, to stop a runaway pony which was carrying a very beautiful child and its nurse to destruction. I don't think that I ever saw such a beautiful little creature as she was, either. I have never forgotten her, although she couldn't have been more than seven or eight years old at the time. Such a little royalty she was, too. Stop! I remember her name, just as she told it to me when I asked her who she was after she had thanked me for rescuing her. She said the entire baptismal name that had been given her, and she did it so demurely, and with such latent dignity, that I have never forgotten it."

Colonel Von Uhler was sitting up straight in his chair now, and he asked somewhat sharply:

"What was the name, Pen?"

"Princess Theresa Constantina Augusta Wanda von Combroch. How is that for a name to fall in love with, and to remember all these years, especially when it is a mere child who bears it?"

"It is the sweetest name in all the world!" exclaimed Trevelyan's companion. "And you are not the only one who has fallen in love with it—and with its owner."

"Eh? Is that how the wind blows? So! That is the magnet that has drawn you to Castle Thunder!"

"Yes."

"Am I to congratulate you?"

"I wish to Heaven you were to do so!"

"What is the trouble, Eitel? You are in love with the princess, of course. I can understand that from your manner. But aren't you high up enough in rank to aspire to her hand? Isn't your love returned?"

The officer did not reply at once, but after a little pause he said:

"It is rather a sad affair, Pen; sad all around. I don't know whether my love was hopeless or not, but I will tell the truth and admit that I rather suspect that it was. But, all the same, I would have sacrificed my life for her at any moment. I would, indeed."

"Is—is she—dead?" asked Trevelyan.

"No. She is alive."

"Then, what is the matter?"

"She met with a terrible accident. She was thrown from a horse almost two years ago. It was in the winter, and the horse slipped on some ice. She was thrown over his head upon the hard, frozen ground of the road,

and she sustained an injury of some sort, to her head, which has kept her in a semicomatose condition ever since. Not a soul save her attendants and the members of her uncle's immediate family—she is an orphan, you know—is permitted to see her at all. Just now, I am told—that is, I was told so about a week ago—she is to be taken to a celebrated surgeon in London, who has promised to perform miracles in her case. I think it is rather odd that English people bring their critical patients to Germany, and German people take them to England."

"But you say that the accident happened more than a year and a half ago, Eitel!"

"Yes. I don't know any more of the particulars than I have told you, but I suspect that it resulted in some pressure on the brain which has destroyed her memory, or something like that. At least, such is the impression that has been given me."

"This English doctor expects to cure her?"

"He has promised to do so, I am told."

"So that is why you haven't been to visit the graf for two summers, is it?"

"Yes."

"I take it that he approved of your suit, inasmuch as you were a regular visitor there."

"Yes; I think so. He is a queer old chap. A regular old-time German baron, proud as Lucifer and almost a barbarian in some respects; but he had one soft spot in his hard old heart, and that was Wanda. Wanda is the name she prefers, although she always signs herself Theresa."

"Is she at the castle now?"

"I suppose so; if she has not already been taken to England."

"When did you say the accident happened?"

"In January, a year and a half ago. But I am no better than a fool to sigh about her. She never would have cared for me. I am much too old for her, you know."

"How old is she, Eitel?"

"She is nineteen, now. I am thirty-four."

"Fifteen years difference. That is not so bad. Is she very beautiful?"

"She is the most beautiful creature that ever the sun shone on. Pen; and the loveliest in every way," replied the count, quite with enthusiasm.

"Tell me one thing, Eitel. How could you aspire to her hand, she being a princess?"

"She is a princess only by courtesy. Her mother was [illegible] blood, and she has been permitted to inherit her mother's title."

"I suppose there were hosts of suitors for her favors; eh?"

"Scores; but she seemed to favor none of them; that is, until——"

"Eh? Until you appeared on the scene?"

"No. I was referring to a queer incident that happened to her once. Two years ago this summer it was, too."

"What was it, if I may ask?"

"There was a party of us riding together, and somehow she was distanced. Anyhow, we missed her all at once, and, supposing that she had merely dropped behind for a moment, we stopped and waited."

"Another accident?" asked Trevelyan.

"Wait. I'll tell you what it was. She had stopped to speak to some poor creature along the road—she was always doing that sort of thing, you know—and when she started on to overtake us, her horse stumbled and fell. She leaped to the ground unhurt, but the horse was lamed so that he could scarcely take a step.

"Now, it seems that while she was wondering what to do, a young chap—an American—who was attending at Heidelberg, happened along. He rubbed the horse's ankle and bandaged it with his handkerchief, which he tore into strips so the animal could walk; and the upshot of it was that when we did start back along the road to find her, we discovered her walking toward us in company with the stranger, who was leading the horse."

"I don't see anything especially uncanny about that," grumbled Trevelyan, as if he had expected a different outcome.

"I'm not through yet. You asked me a little while ago if the princess returned my love. I reply now that she might have done so if that accident had not happened."

"Eh? What do you mean by that?"

"I'll finish the story."

"Do. I thought you were through."

"When the stranger saw us approaching, he stopped, placed the bridle in her hand, lifted his hat, and turned back the other way. I discovered his name later on. It was Maxwell Maxim, a son of the great banker of that name."

"Yes?"

"From that day on, Pen, Wanda was a changed young woman. I have always thought it was a case of love at sight, with her. I think she fell in love with that American."

"But what about *him?*"

"Oh, nothing, I suppose. I don't know that they ever saw each other again. It is very likely that they did not; but even if he never gave her another thought, it is none the less true that he spoiled my chances."

CHAPTER X.

A CASTLE OF THUNDER—A MOUNTAIN OF LIGHTNING.

Nick Carter and Penryn Trevelyan did not retire at all that night.

After they arrived home, they sat up talking together until after daylight had appeared, and then, leaving word with the servant, to be delivered to any chance callers, that they would be absent from the city for several days, they took an early train for Heidelberg.

There was no doubt at all now about the identity of the princess they sought; nor was there any doubt in the minds of either of the detectives that Maxim and the princess had managed to meet many times after that first encounter.

Trevelyan had asked other questions of less importance, that were not recorded in the preceding chapter, and so had gathered the information that, while Colonel Von Uhler had guessed the love-secret of the princess, he was the only one who had done so.

But his own perceptions, rendered sharper by the love he had for the girl, saw at once the truth about the result of that casual encounter; and, although he had no idea that the princess and the young American had met again, Nick and Trevelyan thought differently. At all events, they were now both assured that their theories about the matter were correct.

The city of Heidelberg has about forty or fifty thousand inhabitants, and our two friends settled themselves in one of the hotels for a few days, permitting it to be understood that they were merely idling away the time, and incidentally exploring about the country in a haphazard way.

They took several servants with them to Heidelberg, and they had no trouble in supplying themselves with horses to ride and with equipages in which to drive about the country, and so it was that every day saw them in the saddle part of the time, and in one or the other of the carriages at other times.

Sometimes they went out together; sometimes they went singly; but always with the one object in view of thoroughly scouring the country about where they intended to carry on the campaign; and also with the idea that in some one of the men they encountered they would find young Maxwell Maxim, living in disguise, and hot upon the trail of his ambition to avenge the death of his wife and bring her murderers to justice.

They knew now, of course, that the princess was not dead: knew it positively. They were convinced, also, that she had met with no such accident as has been described.

That, of course, was only the story that had been given out by her relatives at the time of her disappearance, to account for her absence from her usual haunts.

It was plain that she was still confined in the castle that belonged to her uncle, and it was quite as clear that it would be many a long day before she would be set at liberty again.

The people doubtless knew about the power of old Maxwell Maxim, and then, probably, had a wholesome dread that he would exert that power, if once the whole truth should be made known to him, as it would be the instant that Maxwell Maxim should discover that his wife was still among the living.

Nick had no doubt, either, that the princess had been led to believe that her young and handsome husband was dead.

She would have been told that some accident had happened to him; or that he had fought and been killed; and, no doubt, she was living in despair. It was even possible that the terrible trials that she had passed through would eventually actually deprive her of her reason.

And Nick Carter had determined, as soon as the opportune moment came, to penetrate to the interior of that old castle and to search it from end to end.

He sat upon his horse, gazing upon it, the afternoon of the fifth day after their arrival in the neighborhood, and he smiled grimly to himself at the thought of what he had undertaken to do.

Here was an old building that had been erected to withstand sieges. Centuries had come and gone since stone had been lifted upon stone in the work of its construction. The half-barbarian ancestors of the old graf had built it, and the sight of it offered very little encouragement to a man who meant to conquer it almost single-handed.

It has been said before that Trevelyan was familiar with every by-path of that locality. He made the statement himself; but he had been forced to confess to Nick that his knowledge did not include any part of the old castle or the grounds surrounding it.

"Trevelyan," said Nick, when they were seated together in their sitting-room late that same afternoon, "it seems to me to be high time that we were doing something. We have accomplished all that can be done by scouting around here."

"Right you are, Nick."

"I propose that we move on the enemy's works tonight."

"I second the motion; but have you any idea how you are going to make the move?"

"Very little, I will confess. The old castle looks as if it would be a hard nut to crack."

"It does that."

"Have you any idea how we are to get inside of it, Pen?"

"Well, yes. I have. I have been doing a little missionary work myself. I haven't said a thing about it, for the reason that I hoped you would have something better to propose."

"I not only have nothing better; I haven't a thing to suggest."

"Tell me what you had in mind to do when you sug-

gested just now that we make some sort of an attempt upon the castle to-night?"

"I hadn't a thing that is definite in mind. It was my purpose to creep up to the castle under cover of the forest, and then to make our way all around it in the darkness. It is going to be a dark night, and I had merely in mind a voyage of discovery, so to speak."

"Well. I have got a better plan than that."

"What is it?"

"I have been spending much of my spare time in the old library at the college."

"To what purpose?"

"I have been studying up the subject of old castles."

"Ah! That was a capital idea."

"I found very graphic accounts of some of the old feudal castles; a particularly fine one of old Thunder."

"Good."

"It has been built up and hacked to pieces several times. It has been partly destroyed by fire, Heaven knows how many times, and changes and alterations have been made in its plan; but there is one mystery about it that has never been solved; one way into it and out of it, as described by history, which has been forgotten and cannot now be discovered."

"Well, what of that?"

"It occurred to me that possibly we might find it."

"Oh!"

"I'll tell you why."

"Go on."

"The writers about the castle all agree that nobody has ever happened to guess just why the old pile of masonry was named Thunder, unless it might be because that high hill of rocks which some people would call a small mountain, half a mile away from it, is called Blitzen—which is lightning."

"That reminds me," said Nick, smiling, "of my assistant, Patsy. He says that President Roosevelt always makes him think of Emperor William; they're so different."

"Exactly. That is just the idea."

"What is?"

"That 'Donner'—and 'Blitzen' should go together; they're so different."

"Oh. I see. The castle is Thunder and the mountain is Lightning. Is that it?"

"Yes. And there is some connection between the two."

"How do you make that out?"

"Another writer about the castle says that a thunderstorm always terrifies the occupants of the castle, unless they are accustomed to the place. Frequently, when flashes of lightning seem to strike the rocks on the hill, that same flash appears to hide itself under the ground for an instant and then to shoot out into the air from the top of the western tower of the old castle. Now, to my mind, there is some sort of connection between that old hill and the castle which is almost as old."

"Possibly; but we would require about seven years to find it, old chap."

"Well, if we don't find a way into the castle to-night, we will take a ride together out to the mountain to-morrow. What do you say to that?"

"All right. To-night, however, we will go straight to the building itself. I am determined to explore it from top to bottom, Pen."

"And I am with you, Nick."

As soon as it was dark that night they slipped away from their hotel, secured hired horses, and rode within half a mile of the old building, where they found a place to conceal the animals; after which they proceeded the rest of the way on foot.

It is no part of our story to describe in detail the long search they made to discover what they sought—an entrance to the castle. But another word must be said regarding the old pile itself.

In extent, it covered nearly three acres of ground, and it was located in the very center of a valley that was at least a hundred acres in extent.

Its shape was precisely that of a Greek cross, with one arm directed toward each initial point of the compass, and with each arm of the cross connected with its two nearest neighbors by quadrant-shaped masonry, which was perforated by unnumbered loop-holes; or, still another manner of description would be to imagine an immense circular building—like old Castle Garden in New York—but with other piles of masonry extending outward from it to the north, south, east, and west, respectively, and each of these arms surmounted by a high tower.

Entirely surrounding the castle was a deep moat, or ditch, fifty feet in width and nobody could guess how deep, for a violent stream of water tumbled through it; and here was another mystery about the place, for the water rushed into the moat midway between the southern and the western towers from a subterranean channel, and disappeared quite as mysteriously underground, midway between the northern and eastern towers, dividing itself as it entered and rushing in either direction around the castle with equal violence.

The ancient portcullis and bridge were located at the northern tower, and unless that bridge was down and the portcullis raised there was apparently no way at all to cross the moat. As for swimming it, that was manifestly impossible, for the water rushed through it with such rapidity that the strongest swimmer would have found it impossible to do so.

Where this body of water came from and where it disappeared to, were alike mysteries that only the ancient builders of the castle had known.

Of course modern ordnance could have battered the

old pile to pieces in no time at all; but in ancient days the place had been absolutely impregnable to assault. One of the old barons, with half a dozen men, could have held the castle against the Roman legions of Cæsar, or the Carthagenian hordes of Hannibal; and there seemed to be no doubt, judging from the antiquity of the place, that this very thing had been done.

And somewhere inside that old building Princess Wanda was a prisoner.

When Nick Carter and his companion had made the circuit of the place, viewing it closely from every possible standpoint, they came to a halt upon the bank of the moat at the point where the water rushed into it—that is, directly opposite the entrance to the castle—and the detective smiled grimly as he remarked in an undertone to Trevelyan:

"If we had a flying machine, Pen, we might hope to get across this moat; but, as it is——"

Suddenly he leaned forward and peered through the darkness toward the tower, and for a long time he stood like a statue, studying the tower and thinking. Then he turned to his friend again.

"I know how to do it," he said. "But we will have to defer it until to-morrow night; and you will have to wait outside for me, while I go in."

"But how?" asked Trevelyan impatiently.

"I'll explain when we get back to our room. Come on. Let's go. To-morrow night we will make the attack in earnest."

CHAPTER XI.

NICK CARTER'S CONQUEST OF A CASTLE.

It was a few minutes after ten o'clock the following night when Nick Carter and Penryn Trevelyan paused at the same spot on the bank of the moat where they had stood the preceding night, after having made the circuit of the place; but now they had come prepared to carry out the detective's hastily conceived plan.

The tower was built square until it reached what might be called the bottom of the third story from the top; after that it was round; and upon each of the projecting corners so formed stood a carved figure of stone. These were what had attracted the attention of the detective the preceding evening.

The two men had brought with them, in sacks, the implements they required; and now Nick procured from one of these a long flexible rope, which he had made into a lariat.

"It may take several attempts before I succeed in throwing one of these carved images," he said, as he untwisted the rope in his right hand; "but here goes for the first attempt."

We know that Nick Carter has no superior in the matter of casting a rope, and with the first throw the loop settled securely around the base of the image at which he had aimed.

The detective pulled it taut, and they made the near end of it secure around a rock which was exactly suited to the purpose.

"Now," he said, "I am ready;" and he drew on an old pair of gloves to save his hands from friction with the rope.

"There is only one danger that I see," said Trevelyan, "and that is, if the stone image on the tower should not be strong enough to bear the strain."

"It has stood there for centuries," replied Nick, "and it will hold my weight. Anyhow, it is a risk that I must take."

He seized hold upon the rope and swung himself out over the foaming, tumbling water of the moat; and then, with a hand-past-hand motion, he made his way rapidly toward the tower; and all the while Trevelyan held his breath in suspense, expecting each instant to see his friend fall into the seething water and disappear.

But he did not. He gained the corner of the tower and pulled himself upon it; and here he found that the square of the tower formed a ledge all the way around it, which, although very narrow, was still wide enough to permit him to reach one of the windows.

He was not, however, prepared to do that just yet. Instead, he signaled to Trevelyan, and, after a short wait, received a signal in return.

Then he pulled the rope rapidly toward him, and soon he held in his grasp one end of a stout ladder of rope.

He used the lariat for making the ladder fast to the pedestal of the statue, and when it was securely in place, he signaled again; and then, without waiting longer, he rose and began to edge his way toward one of the windows of the tower. His instructions to Trevelyan had been to make the other end of the ladder fast to the rock, so that it would stand the strain of the weight of two persons, and then to wait where he was for developments and for an agreed-upon signal from him, and he knew that Trevelyan would carry out, to the letter, exactly what he had been told to do.

He had provided himself with every tool which he anticipated needing in his work, and so, when he discovered that the small window of the tower was pro-

tected by massive iron bars, he only smiled. Then he linked one arm around a bar and withdrew from his pockets a metal-cutting saw and a tiny can of oil.

With the saw assisted in its work by a plentiful application of the oil, he was scarcely fifteen minutes in displacing the bars so that he could pass his body readily between them; and, as he had suspected, the weather being quite warm, the window itself was open for a circulation of air; and so he raised himself and stepped through the opening into the west tower of the old fortress.

Now, let us remember that the people who occupied the castle had no reason whatever to anticipate any such attempt upon it as the detective had made.

With the drawbridge raised and the portcullis down the ancient pile needed no other guardians; and centuries had passed since any assault had been made upon it whatever.

It was now the home and the habitat of a gentleman of leisure, and it was cut off from the whole world by a seemingly impassable barrier; therefore, its occupants believed themselves entirely secure, and would not dream of intrusion upon their privacy. A better place to have hidden away Princess Wanda could not have been devised.

Nick Carter had arrayed himself entirely in black; he had also provided himself with a mask and gloves of the same hue, so that when he was ready to proceed with his researches there was not a spot upon him that would show in the darkness, and he had only to step into a deeper shadow in order to become invisible. His feet were encased in felt, so that he moved with no sound whatever.

He had brought his electric search-light with him, in case he should need it, but he preferred to accustom his eyes to the darkness and to accomplish as much as possible without the use of the light.

He guessed that the time still lacked a few minutes of eleven o'clock, he had worked so rapidly; and he thought that the people in the castle should not yet have retired for the night.

In that idea he found himself to be correct—later; just now he climbed the winding stairs through the tower to the top of the tower, trying each door as he passed; and finding not one of them locked; nor did one of them give evidence of having been tenanted for many years.

Descending, he made his way to the center of the huge building; the middle of that huge circle already described, and here he found a broad, winding stairway, which descended for one flight and ascended two flights from where he stood; plainly, he thought, the floor beneath him should be the parlor, or reception-floor.

He descended the stairs silently; and now he found himself in the midst of modern decorative splendor. The floors were thickly and heavily carpeted; the walls were hung with tapestries and paintings, and were lined around the sides with massive and magnificent furniture. Flowering plants were everywhere, until the place looked as if a garden had been brought bodily into the castle.

Over it all a dim light, red in hue, was shed from a dozen antique lanterns that were suspended from the high ceilings; and from this spacious hall there opened numerous doors into unnumbered apartments—parlors, banquet-halls, library, dining-room, art gallery, etc.

From several of these rooms lights gleamed out; from one of them came the sound of voices in conversation, and from another the soft strains of music that was strummed from the strings of a harp, by delicate fingers, and with dreamy cadence.

The detective glided forward until he could peer inside the room from whence the conversation reached his ears; and he saw, as he gazed, a powerfully built and forbidding-looking old gentleman, whom he had no doubt was the Graf Von Buhlmach himself.

He had been reading a paper, which now rested across his knees. At the opposite side of the table from him were two other men, younger than himself, and near them was a woman—his wife, evidently.

Nick listened to them for a few moments, but the subject of their conversation did not interest him, and, after satisfying himself that they had no idea of moving from their positions for a time, at least, he passed on to the door through which he still could hear the strains of music.

There were three people in sight, inside the room, when he looked through the doorway; and the detective gave a start of surprise when he saw them, for he instantly realized that in the form of the young woman who was fingering the strings of the harp he saw none other than Princess Wanda.

Her strange and wondrous beauty alone was sufficient to identify her to him; but, added to that, her attitude of utter sadness and her physical delicacy—the

result, no doubt, of the sufferings through which she had passed—convinced him that he had made no mistake in his surmise.

The others were a man and a woman; and the attitude of each of these spoke emphatically of their identities. They were the jailers who had the princess in their care.

The woman, tall, grim, angular, with a hard, relentless face, was seated primly in a straight-backed chair, as motionless as a statue; and the man—a big, burly, low-browed German of the mountaineer type—dressed in the livery of the graf, stood like a graven image at some distance from them, his hands caught together behind him and his face betokening nothing but stolid obstinacy.

Just as the detective had decided all these things in his mind, he heard voices approaching him, and, realizing that there was only one way of escaping observation, he stepped quickly through the doorway into the room and concealed himself behind the heavy folds of some tapestry that hung near the door.

He was not an instant too soon, for he had barely concealed himself when the old baron passed him so closely that they might have touched each other.

He was followed by the baroness; the two men who had been with them had evidently departed in another direction.

The baron and his consort paused just inside the door, and the baron, addressing himself to the graven image in livery, said coldly:

"Emile, it is time that your charge retired." Then to the woman: "Fräulein, I give you good night."

He bowed stiffly, and was turning pompously away when the princess threw aside her harp and started to her feet.

"Uncle," she cried out pathetically, "won't you speak to me? This life is killing me. I am dying by inches. Tell me—for God's good sake, tell me of my child!"

The detective started; and he muttered under his breath: "So! There is a child!"

But the old baron paid no heed to this appeal other than to say coldly to the woman:

"Fräulein, you may say to the princess, and say it once for all, that she shall never, while she lives, hear one word from me that is addressed directly to her, until she has promised, on her soul, to accept the terms I have laid down for her. Tell her that the child lives and is well cared for; tell her that it will not be injured; but tell her that she shall never see it again with my permission, and that, unless she consents finally to give it up, never to refer to it in speech or in writing, and agrees to the other stipulations I have made, she shall remain a prisoner as she is now, doomed to speak to nobody save you and Emile."

"But, uncle!" the princess called after him, as he turned away again; and he made no reply whatever; he merely stalked from the room, followed by the baroness. And the poor princess sank back upon a couch in a convulsion of weeping.

And now was Nick Carter's chance.

He saw instantly that the two attendants would not disturb the princess until her paroxysm of weeping had passed, and he glided quickly to the door again and watched the retreating forms of the baron and baroness until they had disappeared up the wide stairway and he knew them to be beyond the reach of ordinary sounds.

Then, convinced of that much, he stepped swiftly into the room again, and, seizing upon the heavy door, he closed it and locked it silently, just as the fräulein rose to approach the princess and just as the man, Emile, turned his face toward the door and discovered the presence of a stranger in the room.

But he was gazing into the muzzle of a revolver, and he heard—as did the fräulein—these cool, determined words of command:

"Emile, if you utter a sound—and you, too, fräulein—that can be heard beyond this door, I will kill you where you stand, no matter what happens afterward!"

The princess had started to her feet and was standing with her hands clasped together in front of her, facing him, her whole form trembling with terror and amazement, for it was at once plain that she considered this intrusion as only another form of her persecution. But Nick Carter instantly reassured her.

"Princess," he said calmly, and smiling upon her, "I am a stranger to you, but I come as a friend. If you will trust me blindly, I will save you and your child, and I will restore you to Maxwell—your husband."

CHAPTER XII.

THE MAN BEYOND THE DOORWAY.

Utter silence followed this strange speech; but, after a moment, the princess gasped:

"Who are you, sir? Who are you? For God's sake, tell me who you are!"

"My name would mean nothing to you, Princess Wanda. I am an American, like your husband. I am his friend, although I have never seen him; but I am also his father's friend, whom I know quite well. I have been sent here to save him, and to save you, and take you to America, if you will go there. Your child, too; although I did not know till now that there was a child. Will you trust me, princess?"

"Trust you, sir? Oh! what else is there to do? Yes, I will trust you. Anything is better than this torture—even death; and but for my child it should have been death long ago. But"—alarm again getting the better of her judgment—"how am I to know that this is not another plot against me? How——"

"Princess, I entered the castle by making my way along a rope which I succeeded in stretching across the moat. I will take you out that same way, if there should be no other. Later, we will find Maxwell, and——"

Until then all her thought had been for her child, but now the mention of the name of her husband brought him to mind again, and she interrupted with a despairing sigh.

"Maxwell! Alas, Maxwell is dead, sir!"

"No, madam, your Maxwell lives. Believe me! We will find him, too."

"Oh, sir, can you assure me of that?"

"Yes, princess, I think I may assure you of that. But we must not stop now. Will you assist me with these two imbeciles, here?"

"Oh, yes! Anything. Quick! What is it?"

He tossed two pairs of handcuffs toward her with his disengaged hand. Then he commanded Emile and afterward the fräulein to place their hands behind their backs, after which he directed the princess how to snap the irons on their wrists.

That done, he gave her the revolver and told her to stand guard over them; and then he tore several of the pictures from the walls and with the wire cords with which they had been hung he bound the two attendants hand and foot, and later wired them respectively in the seats of two enormous oak chairs. Next, he gagged them and then he put them both to sleep with the judicious use of chloroform.

"Now, princess," he said, when all that was accomplished, "how many persons are there in this castle, where are they, and is there a way out, other than by the rope that I have described to you?"

"But my baby!" she cried. "My baby, sir!"

"Ah, yes. The child. Is it in the castle?"

"Yes, yes, yes!"

"Then we will find it. Come. You must act as guide now. Come!"

He unlocked the door and threw it open. Then he started back with an exclamation of alarm.

Before him, in the doorway, stood the stalwart form of a man, barring their way to escape.

For just one instant the detective hesitated, and he was just about to throw himself upon the stranger when an amazing thing happened.

The princess, who stood directly behind him, uttered a cry of joy, and at the same instant leaped past him and straight into the arms of the man in the doorway.

"*Max! Max! My Max!*" she cried; and the uncouth-looking stranger folded her tightly in his arms, while he raised his head and stood glaring at Nick Carter, as if he were prepared now to fight the whole world; and, indeed, he looked capable of doing so.

"Are you Maxwell Maxim?" asked Nick instantly.

"Yes," was the uncompromising reply. "Who are you, sir?"

"Step into this room, so that we will not be overheard," replied Nick. "I will soon prove to you who I am."

The princess slowly released herself from her husband's arms and looked upon the two men with amazement. It had been her first thought that Nick had brought her husband there with him, and now she saw that they were strangers. But Maxim held an iron bar in his hand, and with one arm still around his wife, he followed Nick into the room, closed the door behind him, and stood with his back determinedly against it.

But at once he discovered the predicament which Emile and the fräulein were in, and he smiled grimly.

"I begin to trust you, sir," he said. "But prove to me who and what you are, and why you are here, as you said you would do; then tell me how you got here."

"Read that," said the detective. "It is from your father, in case I should find you. It will tell you to trust me implicitly, and it is signed with his signature—which nobody can read, much less copy."

He waited a moment while the young man read the short note, and when Maxim raised his eyes again, shining with glad confidence, Nick added:

"I threw a rope over one of the images on the square of the west tower. I climbed over the moat on that, sawed the bars of one of the windows—and so got here."

Maxim extended his hand and grasped the detective's cordially; but he spoke to his wife.

"Wanda, dear one," he said. "It is less than an hour since I knew you lived. Until then I believed that you had been murdered. More than a year I have been working on the estate and among the gardens that surround this castle, but it was not until yesterday that I discovered a way to enter it—through the old mountain that is called Blitzen. We will go out that way. Dear one, I wonder how you knew me in this uncouth disguise. Is it so poor a one?"

"Knew you? I knew you instantly. My heart told me, Max. How big you look in that peasant's garb."

"Yes. I know. But, come. We must not waste time. We have none too much of it. I came here to kill the graf, but I will let him live now. Come, I will take you out by the way I entered—a secret way, which no living man knows about but me; and I found it by accident."

"But! Max! There is something—something that you do not know." She blushed vividly, and then she pulled his head down to her and whispered something in his ear.

Then he started back and stared at her for a moment.

"God!" he exclaimed. "Is it true, sweetheart? Mr. Carter, did you know? There is—is a—there is a—— Oh, I cannot say it! My heart is too full! Wanda, my darling wife, is it true?"

"Quite true," she whispered again, but this time so that Nick heard; and he turned his back upon them while the young father folded his new-found wife tightly in his arms and so held her in utter silence for several moments.

We will not enter upon the details of the search through the castle for the child, for the princess, with the unerring instinct of a mother, seemed to be led directly toward it.

They found the young heir to many millions in the care of a French nurse, in one of the rooms of the south tower of the old pile, and for a munificent consideration she was persuaded to accompany them in their flight; and then, strangely enough, Nick thought, young Maxim conducted them all to the very tower through which Nick had made his entrance to the building; only he led them straight to the top of it and raised a flagstone from the floor of the turret, which disclosed a narrow stairway of stone which descended windingly between the inner and the outer wall of the tower, twisting around it in spiral form, and going down and down until they were far beneath the bottom of the moat; and thence, a gallery which ages ago had been excavated out of the rock and earth, and through which half a dozen men could have walked side by side, led them along a gentle incline upward for more than half a mile, after which they ascended other stairs half-way to the summit of old Blitzen, where, by displacing another stone, they came out upon the side of the rocky hill opposite the castle.

But before the start for this journey from the tower was made, Nick took time to crawl out through the window where he had sawed the bars away, to the place where he had fastened the rope ladder, and he almost ran across the perilous place to the bank of the moat where Trevelyan was awaiting him.

In as few words as possible, he explained everything that had happened; and he instructed him as follows:

"I shall return and remain with them to see them safely out of danger. When I have recrossed the moat, I will cast loose the ropes on the tower, and do you draw them back here to you. Then carry them away with you until you find a convenient place to throw them away.

"Then, Trevelyan, run to the horses. Take one of them and hasten to Heilbenn. You can get the other horses and the carriage out of the stable there alone and without being heard, for those Germans sleep like the dead.

"Drive yourself, and meet us at the place where we left our horses, and bring your own animal back with you. That will give us two extra horses for a change on the road. It is a hundred miles to the frontier of Belgium, but I think we can make it."

Then he hastened back again across the moat and rejoined his friends there.

And, ah! that flight through the night, past villages and farmhouses, over rough roads and smooth roads, through woods and across fields—and here was where Trevelyan's knowledge of the locality came into use.

He knew of places where they made short cuts by literally crossing meadows; and so they flew on and on,

ceaselessly and restlessly, hour after hour, at last changing horses and turning the tired ones loose; and once again, later on, helping themselves to two fresh ones that they discovered in a pasture, and leaving their own in exchange.

The flight was successful. They were not stopped on the road; and they never knew why. But twelve hours after the start they crossed the frontier into Belgium and were comparatively safe.

After that, a change of costumes throughout; and, with passports which Nick had had the forethought to provide before he entered upon German soil at all, they traveled to Paris, and thence to London; and then—New York, and *home!*

In talking with young Maxim, Nick found that the circumstances of the tragedy had been exactly as he had pictured them to Maxwell's father, with the exception that the young man had made his escape almost at once—even as they were taking him from Castle Craig to prison.

After that, believing that his wife was indeed dead, crazed by grief and rage, and well provided with money, he had consecrated his life to vengeance. He had rigged himself out as a peasant; he had succeeded in securing employment on the estates of Graf Von Buhlmach—and the result, after more than a year of patient waiting and toil, we know.

The welcome of the pair by stern old Porter Maxim can be better imagined than described.

But of matters which happened after that, when the princess was missed from the old castle where she had been held a prisoner, we must tell in another story—the one to follow this.

THE END.

The next number, 524, of this weekly will be "The Plot of the Baron; or, Nick Carter's Telling Strategy."

ABOUT THE EARLY NUMBERS OF THE

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WE receive hundreds of letters every week from readers asking if we can supply the early numbers of Tip Top containing Frank's adventures. In every case we are obliged to reply that numbers 1 to 300 are entirely out of print. We would like to call the attention of our readers to the fact that the Frank Merriwell Stories now being published in book form in the Medal Library are inclusive of these early numbers. The first book to appear was No. 150 entitled "Frank Merriwell's Schooldays." We have [illegible] of the following books which have been published at [illegible] up to the time of writing. We will be glad to send a fine complete catalogue of the Medal Library which is sent free, and a good thing, for twelve cents, consists of twelve cent stamp to cover postage.

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